

"That's over, anyhow," he said. Hearing a queer noise behind him, he turned. There stood Marie, snuffing and wiping her eyes.

"Good heavens," he demanded, "what's this?"

Marjory instantly moved to the girl's side.

"There—there," she soothed her gently; "it's only the excitement, *n'est ce pas?*"

"Yes, madame; and you know I wish you all happiness."

"And me also?" put in Monte.

"It goes without saying that m'sieur will be happy."

He thrust some gold pieces into her hand.

"Then drink to our good health with your friends," he suggested.

Calling a taxicab, he assisted her in; but before the door closed Marjory leaned toward her and whispered in her ear:

"You will come back to the hotel at six?"

"Yes, madame."

So Marie went off to her cousins, looking in some ways more like a bride than her mistress.

MARJORY preferred to walk. She wanted to get back again to the mood of half an hour ago. She must in some way get Peter Noyes out of her mind. So quite aimlessly they moved down the Avenue Montaigne.

She laughed a little.

"The minister was terribly serious, wasn't he, Monte?"

"Too darned serious," he nodded. "But, you see, he didn't know. I suppose the cross-your-throat, hope-to-die kind of marriage is serious. That's the trouble with it."

"Yes; that's the trouble with it."

"I can see Chic coming down the aisle now, with his face chalk-white and—"

"Don't!" she broke in.

He looked down at her—surprised that she herself was taking this so seriously.

"My comrade," he said, "what you need is to play a little."

"Yes," she agreed eagerly.

"Then where shall we go? The world is before you."

He was in exactly the mood to which she herself had looked forward—a mood of springtime and irresponsibility. That was what he should be. It was her right to feel like that also.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "I'd like to go to all the places I couldn't go alone! Take me."

"To the Café de Paris for lunch?"

She nodded.

"To the races afterward and to the Riche for dinner?"

"Yes, yes."

"So to the theater and to Maxim's?"

Her face was flushed as she nodded again.

"We're off!" he exclaimed, taking her arm.

THE afternoon left Marjory no time to think. She was caught up by the gay, care-free crowd and swept around in a dizzy circle. Yet always Monte was by her side.

Then she was whirled back to the hotel and to Marie, with no more time than was necessary to dress for dinner. Marie thought madame's cheeks did not look like a good sign.

"I hope madame—"

"Have you so soon forgotten what I asked of you?" Marjory interrupted.

"I hope mam'selle," Marie corrected herself, "has not caught a fever."

"I should hope not," exclaimed Marjory. "What put that into your head?"

"Mam'selle's cheeks are very hot."

Marjory brought her hand to her face. It did not feel hot, because her hands were equally hot.

"It is nothing but the excitement that brings the color," she informed Marie. "I have been living almost like a nun; and now—to get out all at once takes away one's breath."

"Also being a bride."

"Marie!"

"Eh bien, madame—mademoiselle was married only this morning."

"You do not seem to understand," Mar-

jory explained; "but it is necessary that you should understand. Monsieur Covington is to me only like—like a big brother. It is in order that he might be with me as a big brother we went through the ceremony. People about here talk a great deal, and I have taken his name to prevent that. That is all. And you are to remain with me and everything is to go on exactly as before, he in his apartments and we in ours. You understand now?"

At least, Marie heard.

"It is rather an amusing situation, is it not?" demanded Marjory.

"I—I do not know," replied Marie.

"Then in time you shall see. In the meanwhile, you might smile. Why do you not smile?"

"I—I do not know," Marie replied honestly.

Though Marie was by no means convinced, she was ready to drop the matter in her admiration of the picture her mistress made when properly gowned. Whether she wished or not, madame, when she was done with her this evening, looked as a bride should look. And monsieur, waiting below, was worthy of her.

In his evening clothes he looked at least a foot taller than usual. Marie saw his eyes warm as he slipped over madame's beautiful white shoulders her evening wrap.

Before madame left she turned and whispered in Marie's ear.

"I may be late," she said; "but you will be here when I return."

"Yes, mam'selle."

"Without fail?"

"Yes, mam'selle."

Marie watched monsieur take his bride's arm as they went out the door, and the thing she whispered to herself had nothing to do with madame at all.

"Poor m'sieur!" she said.

IT was all new to Marjory. In the year and a half she had lived in Paris with her aunt she had dined mostly in her room. Such cafés as this she had seen only occasionally from a cab on her way to the opera. As she stood at the entrance to the big room, which sparkled like a diamond beneath a light, she was as dazed as a debutante entering her first ball-room. The head waiter, after one glance at Monte, was bent upon securing the best available table. Here was an American prince, if ever he had seen one.

Had m'sieur any choice?

Decidedly. He desired a quiet table in a corner, not too near the music.

Such a table was immediately secured, and as Covington crossed the room with Marjory by his side he was conscious of being more observed than ever he had been when entering the Riche alone. His bandaged arm lent him a touch of distinction, to be sure; but this served only to turn eyes back again to Marjory, as if seeking in her the cause for it. She moved like a princess, with her head well up and her dark eyes brilliant.

"All eyes are upon you," he smiled, when he had given his order.

"If they are it's very absurd," she returned.

Also, if they were, it did not matter. That was the fact she most appreciated. Ever since she had been old enough to observe that men had eyes, it had been her duty to avoid those eyes. That had been especially true in Paris, and still more especially true in the few weeks she had been there alone.

Now, with Monte opposite her, she was at liberty to meet men's eyes and study them with interest. There was no danger. It was they who turned away from her—after a glance at Monte. It amused her to watch them turn away; it gave her a new sense of power. But of one thing she was certain: there was not a man in the lot with whom she would have felt comfortable to be here as she felt comfortable with Monte.

Monte was having a very pleasant time of it. The thing that surprised him was the way Marjory quickened his zest in old things that had become stale. Here, for instance, she took him back to the days when he had responded with a piquant

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